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"Quality of Life through Community, Industry, Environment, Recreation, Education. Opportunity awaits you on the Iron Range"

IRON RANGE MAYORS

Aitkin Mayor Gary Tibbitts
Aurora Mayor Doug Gregor
Babbitt Mayor Andrea Zupancich
Biwabik Mayor Jim Weikum
Bovey Mayor Robert Stein
Buhl Mayor John Klarich
Calumet Mayor John Tuorila
Chisholm Mayor John Champa
Coleraine Mayor Dan Mandich
Cook Mayor Harold Johnston
Crosby Mayor Joanna Lattery
Ely Mayor Chuck Novak
Eveleth Mayor Bob Vlasisavljevich
Floodwood Mayor Dave DeNoyer
Gilbert Mayor Karl Oberstar Jr.
Grand Rapids Mayor Dale Adams
Hibbing Mayor Rick Cannata
Hoyt Lakes Mayor Chis Vreeland
LaPrairie Mayor Jonathan Bolen
Keewatin Mayor Bill King
Kinney Mayor Mike Dahl
Marble Mayor Daidre Breen
McGregor Mayor Jerry Farley
McKinley Mayor Tony Nygaard
Mt. Iron Mayor Gary Skalko
Nashwauk Mayor Calvin Saari
Orr Mayor Joel Astleford
Silver Bay Mayor Scott Johnson
Taconite Mayor Lloyd Cogswell
Tower Mayor Orlyn Kringstad
Two Harbors Mayor Chris Swanson
Virginia Mayor Larry Cuffe

January 27, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

As the mayors of Iron Range communities covering the Taconite Assistance Area of Northeastern Minnesota and home to the proposed mineral mining projects including Twin Metals, we are appalled and disappointed in the incessant efforts of Congresswoman Betty McCollum to decide what is best for our backyard. McCollum's latest effort (H.R. 5598) would place a permanent ban on mineral mining in over 230,000 acres of the Superior National Forest.

HR 5598 reads in part; "(b) WITHDRAWAL.—Except as provided in subsection (d) and subject to valid existing rights, the approximately 234,328 acres of Federal land and waters in the Rainy River Watershed of the Superior National Forest in the State of Minnesota, are hereby withdrawn from—(1) all forms of entry, appropriation, and disposal under the public land laws; (2) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and (3) operation of the mineral leasing, mineral materials, and geothermal leasing laws.

(d) REMOVAL OF SAND, GRAVEL, GRANITE, IRON ORE, AND TACONITE.—The Chief of the Forest Service is authorized to permit the removal of sand, gravel, granite, iron ore, and taconite from national forest system lands within the area depicted on the Map if the Chief determines that the removal is not detrimental to the water quality, air quality, and health of the forest habitat within the Rainy River Watershed.

As the elected leaders of our Iron Range communities we have lived and our families have lived through generations of environmentally conscious mining and we are proud to claim that we still have the cleanest water in all of Minnesota. We are tired of metro politicians telling us what is in our best interest while our mining assets continue to contribute the vast majority of revenue for the MN Permanent School Trust Fund, and billions of dollars to our state's economy. We stand united in our opposition to HR 5598 and support the continued environmental review and permitting process for the Twin Metals project.

Respectfully,

Iron Range Mayors



Gary Tibbetts, City of Aitkin



Andrea Zupancich, City of Babbitt



John Klarich, City of Buhl



John Champa, City of Chisholm



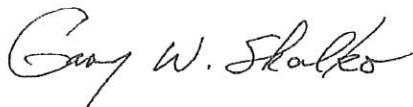
Bob Vlasisavljevich, City of Eveleth



Karl Oberstar, Jr., City of Gilbert



Rick Cannata, City of Hibbing



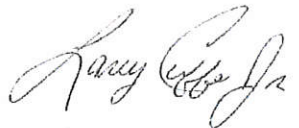
Gary Skalko, City of Mt. Iron



Jim Weikum, City of Biwabik



Doug Gregor, City of Aurora



Larry Cuffe, City of Virginia



Chris Swanson, City of Two Harbors



Chuck Novak, City of Ely



Dave DeNoyer, City of Floodwood



Dale Adams, City of Grand Rapids



Chris Vreeland, City of Hoyt Lakes



Calvin Saari, City of Nashwauk

The RANGE MAYORS are duly elected officials of 32 communities located in Northeastern Minnesota representing 78,000 residents. As mayors we feel compelled to speak out on issues of regional importance and impact as we battle every day to manage our city budgets, provide necessary essential services to our communities and grow our economy for a stronger region for tomorrow.